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**A WORLD PROBLEM**

**P. N. BOSE.**



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# Degeneration—A World Problem

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# Degeneration—A World Problem.

## CHAPTER I.

### DEGENERATION—A FACT.

THE title of this essay\* will probably appear paradoxical to some of our readers. "Degeneration," they would say, "is possible among certain sections of mankind. But considering that the process of evolution has been going on ceaselessly, is not humanity as a whole progressing as ceaselessly?"

A statement like this might have held good about the middle of the last century. The civilized peoples of antiquity had then either ceased to make any progress or degenerated. But other peoples, notably in the West, had during the previous two centuries, been making rapid strides along the path of progress. So there was a

\*So far as India is concerned, the writer has dealt with the problem in his "Illusions of New India" and his "Survival of Hindu Civilization Part II—Physical Degeneration."



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good balance to the credit of mankind as a whole. About the middle of the last century, however, the forces of evolution took a direction which has proved decidedly detrimental to true progress; such progress, that is to say, as makes for the well-being of humanity. There is a conviction among the multitude, amounting almost to superstition, that evolution must make for progress. Not so. "Transformations are not necessarily improvements. The struggle for existence may have as its outcome degeneration as well as amelioration; evolution may be regressive as well as progressive."

Towards the close of the last century signs of degeneration became sufficiently pronounced in the West to be noticed by acute observers.

Herbert Spencer writing in the beginning of the current century, concludes a remarkable essay on "Re-barbarization" with the following significant words :—

"Thus on every side we see the ideas and feelings and institutions appropriate to peaceful life replaced by those appropriate to fighting life. In all places and in all ways there has been going on during the past fifty years a recrudescence of barbaric ambitions, ideas and sentiments, and an unceasing culture of blood-thirst. If there needs a striking illustration





of the result, we have it in the *dictum* of the people's Laureate, that the "Lordliest life on earth," is one spent in seeking to 'bag' certain of our fellowmen."†

Another eminent observer, Alfred Russell Wallace, writing about the same time as Herbert Spencer, says :—

"The latter half of the century (the nineteenth century) has witnessed a revival of the war spirit throughout Europe, which region has now become a vast camp, occupied by opposing forces greater in number than the world has ever seen before . . . And what a horrible mockery is all this when viewed in the light of either Christianity or advancing civilization ! All these nations armed to the teeth, and watching stealthily for some occasion to use their vast armaments for their own aggrandisement and for the injury of their neighbours are Christian nations . . . . . The state of things briefly indicated in this chapter is not progress but retrogression. It will be held by the historian of the future, to show, that we of the nineteenth century were morally and socially unfit to possess and use the enormous powers for good or evil which the rapid advance of scientific discovery had given us ; that our boasted civilization was in many res-

† "Facts and Comments," p.p. 132—133.



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pects a mere surface veneer, and that our methods of Government were not in accordance with either Christianity or civilization . . . It has been often said that Companies have no souls, and the same is still more true of the Governments of our day." \*

The late World-War was the climacteric of the process of Re-barbarization which had been noticed by the great Western Seers, Herbert Spencer and Alfred Russell Wallace. Cataclysmal change is as rare in social as in natural phenomena. Just before the war Germany was the principal seat of western culture. She filled the place which France had occupied before and attracted intellectual pilgrims from all parts of the world. Since the war she has been branded as "Hun," and if even half the brutalities and atrocities that have been attributed to her be true she richly deserves that opprobrious epithet and worse. But she cannot be reasonably disowned by the rest of the Western Powers as she has been of late. She has been, still is, and will continue to be a member of the civilised fraternity of the West. The barbarism which manifested itself in such an extraordinary outburst in her case was by no means so

\* "The Wonderful Century" pp. 331-341.



suddenly developed, nor is it so circumscribed as it is represented to be. There were premonitory symptoms of the apparently abrupt eruption which might have been, and, as we have seen above, were actually foreseen by discerning observers. These symptoms were not confined to Germany. Under the glittering crust of modern culture there were simmering forces of barbarism which found their greatest vent in Germany (probably because she was most eminent in that culture) and broke out there with tempestuous fury. But this great eruption had been preceded, and has been succeeded by numberless smaller eruptions. The barbarities of Belgium in Congo, of several Western Powers in China during the Boxer Campaign, and of Italy in Tripoli, are still fresh in the memory of living men. The inhumanities perpetrated by the Russian revolutionaries are quite of a piece with the worst that have been ascribed to the Germans. If Germany had her Lusitania and Louvain, Great Britain has had her Balbriggan and Amritsar. And in America, "there has taken place week after week in the years of peace for half a century atrocities more ferocious than any which are alleged against even the British or the German. Neither of the latter burn alive weekly untried fellow countrymen with



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a regularity that makes the thing an institution."\*

### II.

The end of the Great War has not improved matters. If anything, they have been going from bad to worse. In regard to the much talked of hope-inspiring fourteen principles of President Wilson, an American paper humorously recounts the fourteen points actually achieved as:—"1. Secret diplomacy, secret covenants secretly arrived at; 2. Clique of Nations; 3. Annexation; 4. Indemnities; 5. Self-determination of nationalities whenever allowed; 6. International relations, blockade and militarism; 7. Domestic situation, repression, espionage, censorship, raid,

\* Norman Angell—"The Fruits of Victory P. 157." "Sixty-five persons (including one woman) were lynched during 1920. Of the victims thirty one were hanged, fifteen shot, *thirteen burned alive*, two drowned, one flogged to death, and the rest done to death in some unknown manner. The causes which called forth this manifestation of white civilization and humanity were: jumping a labour contract, connection with a moonshine still, aiding escape of murderers, assaulting a white man, threatening to kill a white man, and election day disturbances. It should be remembered in this connection, that the cold-blooded murder of upward of thirty negroes in the election riots at Ocoee, Florida, whose only offence was that they had the temerity to approach the polling booth to cast their ballots during the elections last year, is not included in the above figures. Although the law qualifies the negroes to be voters, in actual practice they are debarred from exercising this right by the systematic frightfulness of the whites." (*The Asian Review* quoted in the *Modern Review* for August, 1921).



deportation ; 8. End the Great War and continue twenty-three small ones ; 9. Victory without peace ; 10. Peace treaty, the first step towards the next great war ; 11. Camouflage ; 12. Hate ; 13. Revenge ; 14. Prepare for the War that is to come."

Never since the dawn of history have the sufferings of mankind been so intense, so universal, so multifarious, and so pervasive as at the present day. The whole world has become a seething scene of destitution, disease, vice, and malevolence. In the emphatic language of Frederick Harrison, "Kingdoms, constitutions, churches, peoples, are in chaos." There is no surer indication of moral degeneration than the diminution of the spirit of benevolence and of selflessness ; and there is evidence everywhere of such diminution. There is no surer sign of barbarization than the increase of the fighting spirit ; and there is evidence everywhere of such increase. The empire of Enmity and Discord has been spreading, and that of Amity and Harmony has been contracting. The cult of "Can I kill thee, or canst thou kill me," or "each for himself and devil take the hindmost," has been permeating all sections of the community in a way it never did before. The conflict between Government and people, between class and class, between



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men and women, and between individual and individual has everywhere been gaining in volume in intensity, and in animosity. The craven spirit of commercial greed is running riot all over the "civilized" world. Human vultures gloat over the big profits made by exploiting the helpless sections of humanity. Individual freedom even among the so called free nations of the world is passing away, and man is becoming a mere cog of the great state wheel. Further proof of degeneration is afforded by increase in crimes, in divorces, in venereal diseases, and in suicides.

"Never," says Mr. Edmund Holmes, "was the standard of duty lower. Never was dishonesty rife. Never was the mania for owing things more obsessive. Never was the pursuit of pleasure more absorbing." Mr. A. G. Gardiner says in an article in the *Century Magazine* for October 1921, (quoted in the *Modern Review* for November 1921):

"Europe three years after the war, is like a derelict ship left helpless on the face of the waters. The storm has passed, and the waters have subsided, but the ship is a wreck. Its timber has parted, its machinery is scrapped, helm and compass and all the mechanism of control are lost. Worst of all there is no captain.

When peace came, the cohesive motive that made for the solidarity of the mass during the war disappeared. The simple issue of the war was dispersed into a thousand conflicting and



fragmentary issues, national, economic, political, personal. The leap of Niagara was broken and scattered in the tumult of the whirlpool. Pre-war society had gone to pieces in a paroxysm of violence, and European civilization lay stunned and disintegrating, all its traditions gone, all its landmarks submerged. Faith in man had perished with faith in institutions, and the moral sanctions of society were repudiated as frankly as its political bonds. A fierce egotism, descending from the race to the nation, from the nation to the class, and from the class to the individual person, became the general note, and the spirit of Prussianism, crushed in Berlin, took possession of the heaving masses of European society. The old gospel, with all its social contracts, had gone in the whirlwind, and the law of the jungle became the law of Europe. It is in these circumstances that the bankruptcy of our moral and spiritual sources has been manifest . . . We are without leadership and without a leader, and no voice is heard above the ugly scramble of savage appetites in which nations are falling daily to even deeper levels of ruin."

"People talk," observed Winston Churchill in a recent address, "about the world on the morrow of the Great War as if somehow or other we had all been transported into a higher plane, whereas in reality we had been transported into a sphere which is definitely lower from almost every point of view than that which we attained in the days before the Armageddon. Never was there a time when men were more disposed to turn to courses of violence, to show scant respect for law for tradition and procedure than the



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present. Never was a time when more collousness and indifference to human life and suffering was exhibited by the great communities all over the world."

The *Nation* (Dec. 24, 1920) discussing in a leading article whether Christians were really entitled to celebrate the birth of Jesus says :—

"It is impossible, we hope, for us nominally Christian folk to celebrate the birth of Jesus without a feeling of shame or even of hypocrisy. What, we must think, have we to do with him or he with us? What, in fact, should we do if he reappeared in our society? It is clear that we should not recognize him, and that long before three years of his ministry had expired State and Church would combine against him in the old Judæan fashion, to bully, to betray and to kill. In truth, there would be no need for Jesus to essay a second travail. We are known by our fruits. For six years not a Christian deed has been done in the name of any Christian nation, nor, save in mockery of man's despair, or in vain appeal to the moral sense of his rulers, has one Christian word been spoken in their behalf. It may even be said, that our Christianity, professed but not followed, does us more harm than good, for while we use it to consecrate war, and to cloak greed and polity as religion, we mask our souls with a new and deep falsification. The Christian world is a simple dwelling built for humbleminded men. We rear our proud temples on self-love and the depreciation of our neighbour. Worshippers of Moloch and Mammon, of Power and of Empire, would it not be better for us to own up, and, confessing that the God we worship lives not in the spirit of Jesus, follow a frank Diabolism, in place of a sham Christianity."



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The Rev. E. S. Tipple declared at a recent Methodist Conference in England, "that the world had fallen into a moral slump. Ideals had undergone amazing changes. Conceptions of primary gospel principles had been disturbed, truth had been perverted, Christian principles had lost their lustre, and physical force rather than moral law had been given the supremacy. There had been a universal recrudescence of sin, particularly in America, and the sense of sin had been dulled. And this is not all. Modern manners have deteriorated painfully. There is a growing vulgarity and recklessness in dress and behaviour, and an increasingly alarming disregard for the sanctity of the home. The world is groaning under industrial coercion, oppression, and antagonism, race-riot, ignorance, and illiteracy. There are millions of underpaid people in all lands, people who can scarcely provide the necessaries of life, who live monotonous, colourless lives, who know nothing of the sheer joy of living; there are multitudes who live in filth and squalor and sin, people with stunted bodies, stunted minds and stunted moral perceptions."

### III.

I have shown above how well marked has recent moral degeneration been in the civilized world. Physical degeneration also has been almost equally pronounced. It too began to be noticed by eminent Western observers about the close of the last century. Max Nordau says in a work entitled "Degeneration;" (1898):—"It has become a commonplace to speak of the constant increase of crime, madness, and suicide. In 1840,



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in Prussia out of 100,000 persons of criminally responsible age, there were 714 convictions ; in 1888, 1,102 . . . . In 1865, in every 10,000 Europeans there were 63 suicides, in 1883, 109 ; and since that time the number has increased considerably. In the last twenty years, a number of new nervous diseases have been discovered and named . . . . And they are exclusively a consequence of the present conditions of civilized life. . . . . Many observers assert that the present generation ages much more rapidly than the preceding one. Sir James Chrichton-Browne points out this effect of modern circumstances on contemporaries in his speech at the opening of the winter term, 1891, before the medical faculty of the Victoria University. From 1859 to 1863, there died in England, of heart disease, 92, 181 persons ; from 1884 to 1888, 224, 102. Nervous complaints carried off from 1864 to 1868, 196,000 persons ; from 1884 to 1888, 260,558." Sir James in his speech says further on : "Men and women grow old before their time. Old age encroaches upon the period of vigorous manhood... Deaths due exclusively to old age are found reported now between the ages of forty-five and fifty-five." \*

Herbert Spencer writing in 1902, pointed

\* *Op. cit.* pp 40—42,



out as evidence of a "general relative debility" of the English people, that "measles is a severer disease than it used to be, and deaths from it are very numerous," and that in regard to Influenza, "sixty years ago, when at long intervals an epidemic occurred, it seized but few, was not severe, and left no serious sequelæ; now it is permanently established, affects multitudes in extreme forms, and often leaves damaged constitutions. The disease is the same but there is less ability to withstand it." Since the time of Herbert Spencer, Influenza has been becoming more and more violent. The late epidemic beat the record of all previous epidemics. It was estimated in December 1918, that it had killed not less than six millions in three months.

Alfred Russell Wallace, writing about the same time as Herbert Spencer says: "Since 1856, the Registrar-General has given the number of deaths in workhouses, hospitals, and other public institutions for London, and also for England and Wales, and in both areas the proportion of such deaths has been increasing for the last thirty-five years. In 1888, the Registrar-General called attention to this portentous increase which has not yet reached its maximum. . . . There are yet other indications of our terribly unhealthy social condition besides poverty, misery, and preventible



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deaths. The first is the increase of insanity, which is certainly great . . . This increase from 1859 to 1889 was from 1867 per million in the former year to 2907 per million in the latter or more than 50 per cent faster than the population. . . . Closely connected with insanity is suicide, and that this has very largely increased there is no doubt whatever . . . Yet another indication of the deterioration of the people, owing to the unhealthy and unnatural conditions under which millions of them are compelled to live, is afforded by the continuous increase of premature births for the last thirty-five years, and of congenital defects in those which survive." After quoting a table from the Report of the Registrar-General in support of this view, Wallace observes: "The worst features of this table are the continuous increase it shows, indicating the action of some constant and increasing cause, and the more rapid increase in the latter half of the period [1861--1895], indicating that the conditions are becoming increasingly worse and worse."\*

"Probably there never has been" observes Mr. E. Carpenter, "an age, nor any country (except Yankeeland?) in which disease has been so generally prevalent as in England to-day; and

\* "The Wonderful Century," pp. 358—361.



certainly there has never (with the same exception?) been an age in which doctors have so swarmed, or in which medical science has been so powerful, in apparatus, in learning, in authority, and in actual organisation and number of adherents. How reconcile this contradiction—If, indeed, a contradiction it be? . . . . But the fact is, that medical science does not contradict disease, any more than laws abolish crimes. Medical science—and doubtless for good reasons—makes a fetish of disease and dances around it. It is (as a rule) only seen where disease is; it writes enormous tomes on disease, till disease (for it) becomes the main fact of the world, and the main object of its worship. Even what is gracefully called Hygiene does not go beyond this negative attitude.”†

Complaints of physical degeneration are heard from all parts of the world, even from the United States despite her wealth, education, and the peace she has long been enjoying. Dr. Boldaum, Director of the Bureau of Public Health in New York, showed recently that ‘the fall in the life expectation of the middle aged man is general throughout the United States, and the death-rate per thousand at the age period 45 to 54 has increased by nearly 2 per cent during

† “Civilization ; its cause and cure,” 1895, p. 19.



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the last 10 years, and between 54 and 63 by nearly 7 per cent." This is a serious state of affairs, "for middle age is the period at which the addition of years of life would be of greatest value to the race."

Cancer is now a much deadlier disease than ever before. Dr. Robert Bell, the eminent cancer specialist, estimates that the number of deaths from cancer has been doubled in 20 years. The victims of Appendicitis have been annually increasing as well as those of tuberculosis, heart-disease, diabetes, venereal diseases etc. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (July 1919), shows that out of 2, 425, 184 men of military age examined between November, 1917, and November 1918, only thirty-six per cent were perfectly healthy, twenty-three per cent were in the "infirm plane of health," thirty-one per cent were "physical wrecks," and ten per cent "chronic invalids." He observes that there is "ample evidence to show the baneful effects of certain conditions of modern life upon the physique of youths and men of military age which cannot fail to effect some degree of deterioration of the stock and militate against the health of succeeding generations." A writer in a recent issue of *Munsey's Magazine* quotes a medical examiner who says "that his experience in Manchester



and Stockport led him to the conclusion, "that most of the industrial classes in this region are, for military purposes, old men at thirty-eight."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PRIMARY CAUSE.

#### I.

EUROPE entered the Second or Intellectual Stage of her civilization early in the seventeenth century.\* The most characteristic feature which distinguishes it from the same stage of ancient civilizations, especially of India, is the marvellous progress of Natural Science. The Aryans of Europe (with the exception of Greece and Italy) were not so favoured by their physical environment as their brethren in India. The wants of the outer life being easily satisfied, the latter had abundant leisure to turn their attention to problems connected with the inner life. Far different was the case with their congeners in Europe. For thousands of years the great majority of them were engaged in a keen struggle for bare existence and were but little above the savage level. The efforts made by them to obtain mastery over Nature has left its impress upon their national character which exhibits qualities requisite for sustained action in an eminent degree. It has also developed a habit of mind which is as helpful for a minute

\* Vide "Epochs of civilization" p. 274. *et seq.*



investigation of the objective world, as it is prejudicial to a close study of subjective phenomena. Old Sciences, such as Physics and Chemistry, have been carried to a state of perfection beyond the most ardent dreams of the ancients : and new sciences such as Geology, Zoology and Botany have been developed which were but little known to them. Galileo, Franklin, Faraday, Volta, Ampere, Priestley, Davy, Cavendish, Gay-Lussac, Darwin, Wallace, Hœckel Huxley, Linnœus, Buffon, P.de Candolle, Cuvier, Hooker, Herbert Spencer, Elie de Beaumont, Murchison and Lyell are only a few of the galaxy of eminent scientists that have adorned the Western world during the last three centuries.

Side by side with intellectual progress there went on physical and moral progress. Before the eighteenth century, London and other cities were in a condition of general filth which one can hardly realise now. The effects of a heavy shower in the City of London are thus described by Swift :

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,  
And bear their trophies as they go.  
Filths of all hues and odours seem to tell,  
What streets they sailed from by their sight and smell.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts and blood.  
Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,  
Dead cats and turnip tops come tumbling down the flood.

The food of the great majority of residents of cities like London consisted chiefly of salt meat and salt fish in winter. Fresh vegetables were scarce. Consequently down to the last quarter of the eighteenth century scurvy continued to be common and fatal. About the end of the eighteenth century, fresh meat, fresh fish and vegetables came largely into use, and water-supply and general sanitary conditions improved greatly. A marked abatement of the virulence of disease was the necessary consequence.

Ethical progress was no less marked. The writings of Descartes, Bentham, Mill, Herbert Spencer, Montaigne, and a host of other eminent authors did much to elevate the moral standard of Europe. The great philanthropist, Howard, who led a life of "unsullied and fruitful beneficence" travelled far and wide, doing works of philanthropy. Barbarous persecution of religious opinion ceased; the nefarious slave trade was abolished; and the treatment of criminals became more humane.

But degeneration, physical as well as moral, set in about the middle of the last century, and became, as we have seen before, sufficiently pronounced towards its close to be noticed by prescient Western observers. Since then it has been proceeding at an accelerated pace.



The primary cause of this degeneration appears to us to have been the industrial revolution due to the application of Natural Science to industry, warfare, and means of locomotion on a gigantic scale which has stamped the modern civilization of the West (or Western civilization as it is briefly called) with the distinctive character of Industrialism and which differentiates it from the civilizations of antiquity. Had the aim of Natural Science which, as we have seen above, has been making wonderful progress in modern Europe, been intellectual and ethical culture, it would have advanced Western civilization to the highest or ethical stage and would have done immense good to mankind. But its much-belauded practical applications, its industrial feats, and inventive miracles, have, as we shall see in our future articles, landed humanity in a filthy, stinking morass in which it has of late been sinking more and more deeply. Instead of the boon it is loudly trumpeted to be, it has, owing to its intimate, and, as we are strongly inclined to think, illegitimate union with Industry and War, proved a veritable curse. Instead of a tree yielding wholesome and nourishing fruit, it has turned out to be a deadly Upas tree.

## II

In regard to physical degeneration, there is almost a consensus of opinion, that it is due to the conditions of modern civilization. The life of the average civilized man now is a round of work, excitement and anxiety. He is in a perpetual whirl, a stranger to that harmonious, tranquil, contented state of mind which is so essential for health. And, as has been well observed in the *Yoga-Vasishtha*, "when the ordinarily calm mind is agitated, proper perception fails, and the *prana* (vital current) flies from its even path and takes a wrong course . . . . The food which settles itself down in the stomach amidst such commotion is transformed into diseases." "We are living," says an American author (Dr. Kress), "in an age of unrest. Everything about us is moving at high tension, at break-neck speed. The extraordinary events of a few years have become ordinary and commonplace . . . . This continuous excitement and the unnatural nervous tension make demands upon the resources of nerve energy far beyond the ability of nature to restore. It is this tremendous nerve-racking life that creates the demand for stimulants and narcotics—stimulants to whip the jaded energies, narcotics to deaden the senses, and lead to forgetfulness or unconsciousness of the system's condi-



tions and needs . . . The demand is so common that every well regulated family is supposed to have its medicine chest. Nerve-tonics, brain-stimulants, and sleep-producers are used for every ailment, whether stomach-ache, head-ache, or heart-ache. The effect is seemingly good. The nervousness, the 'tired feeling,' the insomnia, the pain may be promptly relieved, and the lagging energies may be spurred up. But the symptoms later return in an aggravated form, and the sufferer turns to the narcotic again. Larger and larger doses are taken as the habit is forming until at last the fetters are forged, and a new 'drug fiend,' is created — a class multiplying in all countries, and more in America than in any other country. Excepting prostitutes, the greatest percentage of drug addicts are found among professional men, especially doctors, and among society women."

The rapidity and multiplicity of invention—its goal to-day being its starting point to-morrow—has made a sudden and tremendous demand on the brain and nervous system of civilized humanity. The leisurely gait of our ancestors has had to be suddenly changed into a stormy stride. There was no time for our organs to adapt themselves to the new environment, and the increased organic expenditure could not be met by anything like an adequate increase of supply. The stomach and the

lungs cannot keep pace with the brain and nervous system. To add to the tragedy of the situation, the supply which these organs can secure is yearly becoming more and more unwholesome. Pure air and pure food are two essential requisites of health. But the civilized man has to breathe the noxious atmosphere of cities, and the supply of pure, wholesome, nourishing food is annually becoming more and more beyond his reach. The prices of absolute necessities have been going up by leaps and bounds, and human vultures gloat over the big profits they make over the needs of starving and distressed humanity. The number of millionaires and multi-millionaires have been increasing, but in inverse ratio to the number of the wretched poor on the brink of starvation. Then again, the propagation of the fundamental but to our mind silly, principle of modern civilization, that the progress and happiness of man lies in multiplying his wants and desires, is leading civilized man to spend a good portion of his resources upon superfluites, inutilities, futilities and fatuities, which, if his conduct were guided by wisdom, would be devoted to wholesome nourishing food.

I have glanced at the main physical causes of recent deterioration of health. The moral influence of modern civilization has also been highly detrimental to it. Benevolence embracing all mankind,



if not all living beings, and selflessness were the basic ethical principles of the advanced civilizations of antiquity. They are of immense hygienic value as they secure that tranquil, harmonious state of the mind which is so beneficial to health. But the propagation, under modern influences, of the gladiatorial view of life, of the perverse creed of "can I kill thee or canst thou kill me," of the narrow spirit of nationalism, and of false notions of equality, have led to an immense increase of the spirit of conflict between individuals, classes and nations, of selfishness, ill-will, greed and jealousy which are highly inimical to health. Fear also is an emotion which prejudices health seriously and it has got a greater hold on civilized man now than ever before. He is in mortal dread of the myriads of germs which modern science has revealed to the man in the street. Caution within limits is commendable. But excessive caution degenerates into cowardice which is inimical to sound health.

Medical science has, it is true, advanced with disease. But as the remedies it has discovered whether by way of medicine or of serum treatment do not touch the root causes of deteriorated health, they are at best palliatives. Even as such their value is disputed by high authorities. \*

\* The subject is discussed at some length in the writer's work on "Survival of Hindu Civilization Part II—Physical Degeneration, its Causes and Remedies."

## III

In the last section I briefly pointed out how Western Civilization has led to physical degeneration. We shall now consider how it has caused moral degeneration.

Benevolence or altruism has from remote antiquity been recognised as the basic principle of ethics. As long ago as B. C. 2435, the Chinese Emperor Kuh is reported to have taught that no virtue is higher than to love all men, and there is no loftier aim of Government than to profit all men. Gautama Buddha in India and Laotoze in China, and Jesus Christ five hundred years after them, enunciated the noble ideal of morality: "Recompense evil with good." It is self-sacrificing benevolence that binds the different classes and nations together, and directs the forces making for material progress to right channels, such channels as lead to the abiding happiness of humanity. Anything, therefore, that weakens it tends to social disruption and political disorder, and prejudices morality at its fountain head. Let us see if the modern industrial civilization of the West, or Western civilization as it is briefly called, has done this and to what extent. In the first place, it has fostered greed which is



one of the primary causes of the recent increase of ill-will and conflict between classes and nations all over the civilized world. Since the dawn of civilization there has never been a society in which certain sections of it have not been actuated by greed, but never has it been so universally prevalent and dominated society to such an extent as at the present day. Western civilization has done this in various ways. It is based upon huge machinery, which requires huge capital. There has thus been created all over the civilized world an influential class of money-grubbing, avaricious millionaires and multimillionaires, whose object, owing especially to cut-throat competition is to exploit labour to the best advantage to themselves. The workmen, on the other hand, have learned to combine and strike with the object of doing as little work for as high a wage as they can extort from the capitalists. There has thus ensued a state of perpetual ill-will and conflict between capital and labour which sometimes assumes the magnitude of civil war and criminal anarchism. "Revolutionary strikes," says Dean Inge, "prepared long in advance by forced levies of money which were candidly called war funds, had as their avowed aim the paralysis of the industries of the country and the reduction of

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the population to distress by withholding the necessities of life."

The evil consequences of excessive greed fostered by modern industrialism do not stop here. It is the motive factor of the recent phenomenal military and predatory activities of the West. As but a fraction of the produce of modern gigantic mills and factories can be absorbed by Europe, markets outside that continent must be found for it and markets in Western vocabulary have come to mean dependencies or "spheres of influence." As the greedy industrial magnates govern the foreign policy of the Great Powers directly or indirectly, the scramble for such markets in Asia and Africa has made international jealousies and rivalries among them (including Japan) much keener than ever before, and has unquestionably been the most potent cause of all the more important recent wars including the late World War. There can be hardly any doubt, that it was primarily due to the keen desire of Germany for the acquisition of "spheres of influence" and dependencies outside Europe. Her objective was not France but Morocco, not England but India.

Modern industrialism has led to the propagation of the religion of enmity and the enhancement of pugnacious propensity not only among



capitalists and workmen, but among nearly, all sections of civilized society (except the purely agricultural) high-placed as well as low-placed, cultured as well as uncultured. The application of science to industry on a gigantic scale has led to the production of an immense quantity of what are called comforts and conveniences, but which are, in reality, mostly brummagen fineries and shoddy superfluities. As the desire for show and the ornamental is innate in all classes in all parts of the world a taste for them spreads rapidly. This spread coupled with the recent immense increase in the prices of the absolute necessities of life causes an enormous enhancement of the keenness of the struggle for animal existence. We have already seen how pernicious this is to physical health. Its influence upon moral health is no less pernicious. Simplicity of living is as favourable to health (physical as well as moral) as complexity of living is unfavourable to it. This is well illustrated in India at the present day, among the aboriginal tribes, such as Khasias, Gonds, Mundas etc. The "uncivilized," seminude aboriginal who sticks to his plough, and whose wants are restricted, is as generally healthy and devoid of greed and dishonesty, as his "civilized" well-draped congener, who has left the plough and whose wants have vastly

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increased, is unhealthy and prone to greed and dishonesty. The truth is, advance from simplicity to complexity, from homogeneity to heterogeneity is beneficial up to a certain limit which has to be determined by physical, economic and moral considerations. The great thing is not perpetual advance of complexity, not ceaseless rushing forward, but the establishment of an equilibrium between the forces that make for material progress and those that lead to ethical progress. Western civilization has not only not established such an equilibrium, but has, by its titanic industrial developments, retarded it in various ways, and excessive and unceasing growth of the complexity of living is one of the most important of these ways. It has by inordinately increasing wants have made greed widely prevalent even among such sections of the community which under the conditions of ancient non-industrial civilization would be expected to be free from it. And there is nothing which demoralises man more than greed, as it breeds and fosters his worst vices, such as selfishness, malevolence, and the combative and predatory spirit.

#### IV

Civilizations based upon agricultural wealth, whose soul lies in the village, are much less per-



vaded by greed, and much more favourable to ethical development than civilizations based upon commercial wealth whose soul lies in the city. The difference in this respect between the ancient Greek and Indian civilizations was pithily expressed by the ascetic Dandin when he told Alexander : "We honour god, love man, neglect gold and condemn death ; you, on the other hand, fear death-honour gold, hate man, and condemn god. Your mind is filled with vast desires and insatiable avarice and a diabolical thirst for empire. You are, made much like other men, and yet you would obtain by force whatever mankind possesses."

The civilization of Europe, whether ancient or mediaeval, whose centres lay in cities were characterized more or less by greed. But the high cultural development of the eighteenth and part of the nineteenth century served as a counterpoise to the evil tendencies of this base impulse. The extraordinary progress, however, of power-driven industry which set in about the middle of the nineteenth century gave an immense impetus to it. To the greed inevitable in commercialism was added that inseparable from industrialism. Besides, owing to the colossal development of industry and of quick transit, commercialism was carried to a degree compared with which that of ancient or mediaeval Europe would sink into utter

insignificance. Even about the middle of the eighteenth century the civilization of Europe was so actuated by greed that Rousseau declared, that "if he were a chief of an African tribe, he would erect on his frontier a gallows, on which he would hang without mercy the first European who should venture to pass into his territory, and the first native who should dare to pass out of it." His spirit would stand agape with amazement at the diabolic doings of the modern civilization of Europe.

I have in the last section shown the moral havoc which the Demon of Greed is committing among the Great Powers of the West and among the various sections of the civilized community. But the depredations of the Demon among the weaker peoples of the globe are a deal worse. The weak has ever since the dawn of life been preyed upon by the strong, but never so scientifically, so systematically and so universally as at the present day. The depredation is all the more dangerous because it is so very insidious as to be almost imperceptible except to a close, detached and impartial observer, and because it is camouflaged under such expressions as "development of industrial resources," "spread of Christianity and civilization," "establishment of the Western democratic form of Government"



etc. Such silent but ceaseless exploitation in the long run does infinitely more harm than the occasional predatory outburst of unmistakable brigands like Jenghis Khan or Mahmud of Ghizni. The harm done to the crust of the earth by mighty, roaring, foaming rivers swollen during the rains at places into sea-like expanses is nothing compared to the denudation slowly effected by the hardly noticed destructive operation of such agencies as rain water, frost and wind, which have in course of time disintegrated and levelled down many a big hill that once raised their heads boldly and proudly high up in the sky.

The following pathetic exclamation of the American Indian known as Red-Jacket before a European Missionary finds a sad echo in the hearts of the weaker and less resourceful peoples of the globe :—

“Brother, listen to what we say. There was a time when our forefathers owned this great land . . . But an evil day came upon us ! Your forefathers crossed the great waters and landed on this land. Their numbers were small ; they found friends, not enemies ; they told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and came here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small seat. We took pity on them, granted their request, and they sat down among us. We gave them corn and meat, and they gave us poison (spirituous liquor) in return. The white people had now found out our country, tidings were carried

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back, and more came amongst us ; yet we did not fear them we took them to be friends ; they called us brothers, we believed them and gave them a large seat. At length their numbers had greatly increased, they wanted more land, they wanted our country. Our eyes were opened, and our minds became uneasy. Wars took place ; Indians were hired to fight against Indians, and many of our people were destroyed. They also brought strong liquor among us ; it was strong and powerful and has slain thousands. Brother, our seats were once large, and yours were very small. You have now become a great people, and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets. You have got our country, but are not satisfied,—you want to force your religion upon us."

"In China, India, Polynesia, Africa, the East Indian Archipelago", says Herbert Spencer, "reasons—never wanting to the aggressor—are given for widening our empire : without force if it may be, and with force if needful. After annexing the Fiji islands, voluntarily ceded because there was no practicable alternative, there comes now the proposal to take possession of Samoa. Accepting in exchange a territory subject to a treaty, we ignore the treaty, and make the assertion of it a ground for war with the Ashantees. In Sherbro our agreements with native chiefs having brought about universal disorder, we send a body of soldiers to suppress it and presently we will allege the necessity of extending our rule over a large area. So again in Perak. A resident sent to advise becomes a resident who dictates ; appoints as Sultan the most plastic candidate in place of one preferred by the chiefs ; arouses resistance which becomes a plea for using force . . . Be it in the slaying of the Karen tribes who resist surveyors of their territory, or



be it in the demand made upon the Chinese in pursuance of the doctrine that a British traveller, sacred wherever he may choose to intrude, shall have his death avenged on some one, we everywhere find pretexts for differences which lead to acquisitions. In the House of Commons, and in the Press, the same spirit is shown. During the debate on the Suez Canal purchase, referring to the possible annexation of Egypt, the Prime Minister said, that the English people wishing the empire to be maintained, "will not be alarmed even if it be increased," and was cheered for so saying. And recently, urging that it is time to blot out Dahomey, the weekly organ of filibustering Christianity exclaims—"Let us take Whydah and leave the savage to recover it."

The Occidentals profess to carry the light of their religion and civilization to the benighted heathens of Asia, Oceania, and Africa. But there is a good deal of truth in the pithy remark of the Chinaman: "First the Missionary, then the Consul; and last the General." "Fundamentally the white, even when civilized, from the moral point of view, is scarcely better than the Negro, and too often by his conduct in the midst of inferior races has justified the argument opposed by a Malagache to a missionary: 'your soldiers seduce our women. You come to rob us of our land, pillage the country, and make war against us; and you wish to force your God upon us, saying that he forbids robbery, pillage, and war! Go you are white upon one side and black upon another.'

Such is the criticism of a savage. The following is that of a European, M. Rose, giving his opinion of his countrymen : 'The people are simple and confiding when we arrive, perfidious when we leave them. Once sober, brave, and honest, we make them drunken, lazy, and finally thieves. After having inoculated them with our vices, we employ these vices as an argument for their destruction.' However severe these conclusions may appear, they are unfortunately true, and the history of the relations of Europeans with the populations they have encountered in America, at the Cape, and in Oceania justify them only too fully.†

## V

I have in the previous section shown how the inordinate growth of industrialism and commercialism due to the inventive miracles of Natural Science has led to the wide propagation of the cult of Mammon worship. The average civilized man now-a-days pays only lip-homage to God or Christ, but the homage of his heart is reserved for Mammon. I have shown to what deplorable extent this soul-withering Mammon-worship has called forth and developed the brutal side of man. What is a matter of grave anxiety for the future of the civilized world is the apprehension lest Pandora's

† A.de Quatrefages, "The Human species" pp. 461—462



box should become quite empty. What makes the outlook for civilized humanity extremely gloomy is the fact, that the ancient line of demarcation between education for culture and that for livelihood is being gradually effaced.

From remote antiquity down to the commencement of the industrial era, one of the chief aims of genuine cultural education was recognised to be ethical and spiritual development. The recognition was more pronounced in the East than in the West, but nowhere was it lost sight of. But one lamentable effect of modern inventional, industrial and commercial activity has been greatly to obscure it, if not remove it from view altogether. Education is being commercialised. The sacred profession of teaching like the other learned professions which formerly bore the distinctive appellation of "honourable" is becoming a mere trade. Culture which cannot be stamped so as to be exchangeable for the means of soft living has but little value now. The technological, that is to say, the purely vocational side of a modern University overshadows the side which professes to be cultural, but which merges into it by insensible gradations. And in countries like Germany which have taken the lead in modern progress there have sprung up Universities solely for the purpose of technical education. The great

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majority of the scientific men of the present day are only glorified mechanics and tradesmen. High thinking and plain living was the characteristic of ancient culture, as little thinking and luxurious living is of modern culture. The cultured ancients whether of the East or of the West generally looked upon trade and industry, in fact upon all purely money-making occupations as fit pursuits of people in lower planes. The cultured classes among the ancients kept as generally aloof from such pursuits, as those among the moderners are steeped in them. There can be no better proof of the vulgarisation and commercialisation of culture than the fact that it has culminated in the "Kultur" of Germany. It has become as unlike ancient culture, as Bottom transformed was like his former self. Thus all education, high as well as elementary, has become more or less mercenary. Its sole object now is to make men more efficient as workmen or experts in factories, mines, plantations and offices, as labourers, engineers, chemists, etc., to equip men (and women also) so that they may take an active part in the present frenzied race for wealth and luxury, or as in the case of the industrially backward peoples of the globe, so that they may be civilized (in the modern sense) and become customers of the powerful



manufacturing States. Not only so. All civilized Governments are vying with one another in disseminating this vulgarized education, as it is as essential for their prosperity (as they understand it) as industry, commerce and armaments.

The wide diffusion of this type of education has led to demoralisation in various ways. Herbert Spencer pointed out long ago that,

"So far, indeed, from proving that morality is increased by education, the facts prove, if anything, the reverse . . . . It has been shown from Government returns "that the number of juvenile offenders in the Metropolis area has been steadily increasing every year since the institution of the Ragged School Union, and that whereas the number of criminals who *cannot* read and write has decreased from 24,856 (in 1844) to 22,968 (in 1848, or no less than 1888 in that period—the number of those who *can* read and write imperfectly has increased from 33,337 to 36,229, or 2,892 in the same time. Another contributor to the series of articles on "Labour and the Poor" from which the above statement is quoted remarks 'that the mining population (in the North) are exceedingly low in point of education and intelligence; and yet they contradict the theories generally entertained upon the connexion of ignorance with crime by present-

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ing the least criminal section of the population of England.' And speaking of the women employed in the ironworks and collieries throughout South Wales he says--'their ignorance is absolutely awful ; yet the returns show in them a singular immunity from crime' . . . . The fact is, that scarcely any connexion exists between morality and the discipline of ordinary teaching. Mere culture of the intellect (and education as usually conducted amounts to little more) is hardly at all operative upon conduct . . . . Intellect is not a power but an instrument—not a thing which itself moves and works but a thing which is moved and worked by forces behind it. To say that men are ruled by reason is as irrational, as to say that men are ruled by their eyes. Reason is an eye—the eye through which desires see their way to gratification. And educating it only makes it a better eye,—gives it a vision more accurate and more comprehensive—does not at all alter the desires subserved by it. . . . . Probably some will urge that enlightening men enables them to discern the penalties which naturally attach to wrong-doing, and in a certain sense it is true. But is only superficially true. Though they may learn that the grosser crimes commonly bring retribution in one shape or another they will not learn that the subtler ones do. Their sins will



merely be made more Machiavellian . . . . Did much knowledge and piercing intelligence suffice to make men good, then Bacon should have been honest, and Napoleon should have been just . . . . It is, indeed, strange that with the facts of daily life before them in the street in the counting house, and the family, thinking men should still expect education to cure crime."\*

Since the time when Herbert Spencer wrote this, "education" has been making rapid strides. And as the cult of Mammon-worship has been spreading concurrently, the sharpened intellect of its enormously increasing "educated" devotees is directed towards the appeasement of that exacting and insatiable usurper of god-head. As a necessary consequence, and as was anticipated by Herbert Spencer, there has been an appalling enhancement of crimes of a Machiavellian character, crimes that elude the clutches of law but which, on the whole, are much more dangerous to society than crimes that come within its grasp. † Society has  
(*Social Statics* -- National Education).

\* In regard to the increase of crime with "education" see 'The Illusions of New India' pp, 145-147.

† "The lawlessness of our lads" observes general Booth, "the increased license of our girls, the general shiftless from the home making point of view of the products of our factories and schools are far from re-assuring. Our young people have never learnt to obey. The fighting gangs of half-grown lads in Lisson Grove, and the scuttlers of Manchester are ugly

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become the happy hunting ground of hordes of ingenious wily gamblers, sharpers, profiteers pilferers, swindlers and Stygian beach-combers. Civilization has always favoured the growth of a certain amount of mendacity, of the subtle machinations of scheming politicians, and of resort to tortuous, dark alleys and by—roads of exploitation, but never to the dreadful extent it does now. There have always been some parasites in civilized society but modern civilized society has become a veritable paradise of blood-sucking parasites.

### VI

I have in the last section shown how the sinister influence of modern industrialism and commercialism is leading to the gradual obliteration of the old line of demarcation between cultural and vocational education, and how the wide diffusion of mercenary, money-making education is leading to moral degeneration and to a fearful increase of Machiavellian crimes. There is abundant testimony to this effect. "From the great houses in the city of

symptoms of a social condition that will not grow better by being left alone. It is the home that has been destroyed, and with the home the homelike virtues. It is the dis-homed multitude, nomadic, hungry that is rearing an undisciplined, population, cursed from birth with hereditary weakness of body and hereditary faults of character." ("In Darkest England and the Way out" p. 66.)



London to the village grocer," says Froude, "the commercial life of England has been saturated with fraud. So deep has it gone that a strictly honest tradesman can hardly hold his ground against competition. You can no longer trust that any article you buy is the thing which it pretends to be. We have false weights, false measures, cheating and shoddy every where . . . . . We Londoners are poisoned in the water which we drink, poisoned in the gas with which we light our houses, we are poisoned in our bread, poisoned in our milk and butter, poisoned in the remedies for which, when these horrible compounds have produced their consequence, we in our simplicity apply to our druggist, while the druggists are in turn cheated by the swindling rogues that supply their medicines." "It is much to be questioned," observes Lecky in his *Map of Life*, "whether the greatest criminals are to be found within the walls of prisons. Dishonesty on a small scale nearly always finds its punishment. Dishonesty on a gigantic scale continually escapes. . . . In the management of companies, in the great fields of industrial enterprise and speculation, gigantic fortunes are acquired by the ruin of multitudes; and by methods which though they avoid legal penalties are essentially fraudulent. In the majority of cases these crimes are perpetra-

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ted by educated men who are in possession of all the necessaries, of most comforts, and of many luxuries of life, and some of the worst of them are powerfully favoured by the conditions of modern civilization. There is no greater scandal or moral evil in our time than the readiness with which public opinion excuses them, and the influence and social position it accords to mere wealth, even when it is acquired by notorious dishonesty, or when it is expended with absolute selfishness, or in ways that are absolutely demoralising."

Frederick Harrison said, in an interview published in the *Times* a year and a half ago, that "the boom in education has not brought any nobler literature, any greater art, any purer drama any finer manners. Serious literature is being choked out by the increased cost of printing, the abolition of a leisured class able to study in peace and to produce from its learning, and by the mad whirl of modern existence. The result of this chaos in spiritual and moral training is a manifest loosening of the canons of moral life, the defiance of discipline by the young and ambitious, the mockery of age and all the lessons of age ; worst of all, the sacrifice of family as a moral institution, and the degradation of marriage to be a temporary partnership entered into as a frivolous mode of getting 'a good time' and to be cast off as easily



as a lodging which is not convenient." The effect of "education" upon the proletariat has been tersely described by John Stuart Mill as only a craving for "higher wages and less work for the sake of more sensual indulgence."

"The mockery of age, and the lessons of age" referred to by Frederick Harrison is one of the most baneful results of the "education" boom. In the East, especially in India and China, the ideal of greatness has always been that of transcendent wisdom, the consummation of intellectual and spiritual development which usually grows with age. In the West, on the contrary, great men of this type have never counted for much with the multitude. As I have said elsewhere ("Epochs of civilization"), "Socrates was charged with impiety and with corrupting the morals of the youth of Athens and sentenced to death. His followers were persecuted to such an extent that Plato had to seek refuge for a time in Megara. It was the influence of Alexander that protected Aristotle at Athens. After the death of his patron, Aristotle was compelled to leave Athens in order to escape from an accusation of impiety and died at Eubœa." The mischief done by the obliteration of the old line of demarcation between cultural and vocational education, and the wide diffusion of the latter is two-fold. It is leading to the disappearance of true culture and to the

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diminution of what little respect there formerly was for such culture. It is the influence of sages such as Herbert Spencer and Tolstoi, that improves the morals of the multitude. That influence however, is being gradually reduced to the vanishing point. There is a Sanskrit couplet:—

“Ajna Sukhamārádhya, Sukhataramārádhya.  
Vishesajna:

Jñānalāba durbidagdham, Brahmāpi naramāna.  
ranjayati.

“It is easy to satisfy the illiterate. Still easier to satisfy the highly cultured.

But God Himself cannot please a person who is puffed up with little learning.”

The dangers of “little learning” are writ large on every page of the history of present day civilized society. The race of sages is not yet altogether extinct in the West. But they have hardly any following, and exert but little influence upon the mass of the people. The widespread influence exerted upon the multitude in India by Mahatma Gandhi, whose main, if not the only title to greatness, is his self-sacrificing benevolence, would be an impossible phenomenon in the West. The title of “great” there in pre-industrial times was monopolised by gifted free-booters like Alexander, Frederick and Napoleon. The



disastrous effect of modern industrialism and of the propagation of vulgarized education due to it upon Western morals is evidenced by the fact, that since the inauguration of the industrial era, the catalogue of "great men" has been expanded by the inclusion in it of scheming politicians who are experts in the arts of duplicity, mendacity and verbal acrobatics, of ingenious inventors who prostitute science to industry and war, of those blood-sucking leeches the multimillionaires, and of the literary impostors who pander to the vitiated tastes of a pseudo-educated public. \*

## VII

"I do not care," declared Ruskin emphatically "that children, as a rule, should learn either reading or writing, because there are very few people in this world who get any good by either.

\* Max Nordau observes in regard to some of these impostors; "Mere Sewage exhalations are played out. The filth of Zola's art and of his disciples in literary canal-dredging has been got over, and nothing remains for it but to turn to submerged peoples and social strata. The vanguard of civilization holds its nose at the pit of undiluted naturalism, and can only be brought to bend over it with sympathy and curiosity when by cunning engineering, a drain from the boudoir and sacristy, has been turned into it. Mere sensuality passes as commonplace, and only find admission when disguised as something unnatural and degenerate. Books treating of the relations between the sexes, with no matter how little reserve, seem too dully moral. Elegant titillation only begins when normal sexual relations leave off. Priapus has become a symbol of virtue. Vice looks to Sodom and Lesbos; to Bluebeard's castle and the servants' hall of the 'divine' Marquis de Sade's *Justice* for its embodiments" ("Degeneration" P' 133)

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Broadly and practically whatever foolish people read does them harm ; and whatever they write does other people harm." Civilised society is roughly divisible into three classes: The first class comprises men and women who are highly developed ethically and who may be called superior persons or sages. The second class consists of knaves, and the third of fools. There are, of course, intermediate grades which make these classes pass into each other almost insensibly—people with various proportions of knavery and ethicality between the first and second, and with different degrees of knavery and stupidity between the second and third. The first class, as we have seen before, never very strong and influential in the West, has, since the establishment of the industrial regime, been dwindling in number and importance. The second class is the most influential at the present day. It is not numerically the strongest. But as Coleridge says, "a knave is a fool with a circumbendibus," and as "education" is supplying this circumbendibus, there is constant accession to it. The third class, that of fools is everywhere the most numerous. And if what Ruskin says be true—and I believe it is, to a very large extent at least—the amount of harm which "education" is doing among them both as readers and writers must be dreadful.



The results of the enormously increased activity of the modern press are shallowness, a sad dearth of literature which, in the words of Bacon, may be "chewed and digested" to advantage, an exuberance of literature which is not fit even to be "tasted."

The whole system of morality is turned topsy-turvy. Curtailment if not the suppression of Desire leading to renunciation has always, from the remotest antiquity, been regarded as one of the primary requisites, of moral advancement. But ceaseless feeding of Desire resulting in perpetual multiplication of wants and of means and appliances for gratifying them, is now loudly proclaimed as one of the cardinal principles of modern progress. Self indulgence, and not self-abnegation is the rule of civilised life now. The uplift of the proletariat was always associated with ethical as well as material amelioration. But now-a-days it has come to mean to "educate" them so as to set them against the other classes, to infuse enmity and discord where there formerly prevailed amity and concord, and to sap the foundation of society by loosening the bonds of benevolence and reverence which formerly held it together. Woman was the guardian angel of home and the main prop of the moral structure of society. She is now being

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“emancipated” by “educating” her so as to unsex her and let her loose into the fields of professions and politics, the moral atmosphere of which never very wholesome has of late been increasing in deadliness. The consequence, as has been pointed out by Frederick Harrison, is the “sacrifice of family as a moral institution, and the degradation of marriage to be a temporary partnership.” A new code of morals is springing up which, in many respects, is the antithesis of the one that has prevailed till now, the negation of sacred principles the most precious heritage bequeathed to humanity by the sages of antiquity.

It is loudly claimed as one of the good things resulting from the wide diffusion of modern “education,” that it has enlightened the multitude and killed superstition. But, as I have said elsewhere (“The Illusions of New India”), “from the dawn of human history the mass of the people have always been more or less superstitious, have always been guided more or less by forms and formulas everywhere, even in societies which claim to be most highly civilized. It cannot be otherwise, and it will never be otherwise, unless there is a revolution in the mental constitution of man, of which there is no sign as yet. Life is so short, and the path of true knowledge is so long and so arduous, that real enlightenment must be the



prerogative of the few. Compulsory education or no compulsory education, the 'man in the street,' is always more or less ignorant, and casts off one superstition only to take up another. If he ceases to believe in the efficacy of charms and relics, of pilgrimages and ablutions, of *Mantras* and *Yajnas* to secure his salvation, he forthwith begins to entertain a belief, no less superstitious ( and much more injurious ) in the efficacy of steam and electricity and of other scientific developments as a cure for the ills of life. . . . . He pulls down old gods and goddesses such as Siva, Vishnu, Christ and Kali, only to instal new ones in their places, such as wealth, war, pleasure, or fatherland. If modern influences have shaken his belief in creation by the fiat of an Almighty Being, he has either ceased to believe in such a Being, or worse still, pays superstitious homage to a new deity denominated Evolution, and zealously propagates the cult of "Might is Right," of 'Can I kill thee or canst thou kill me.' If he casts off a superstitious belief in the gospel of Duty and Renunciation, he instantly begins to entertain a no less superstitious and much more harmful belief in the gospel of Right and Enjoyment.'

The old superstitions did not do a fraction of the harm which the new ones are doing. Indeed, some of the former were distinctly beneficial to

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society. Such superstitious beliefs, for instance, as are entertained by the multitude, in the prowess of a Hanuman or Samson, in the devouring by a couple of she-bears of forty-two Jewish children for laughing at a prophet, in Jonah's whale harbouring "the disobedient prophet as an inside passenger", in the floating of the Noah's ark over a flooded world, or in the floating of an iron axe-head at the bidding of Elisha do no more harm to humanity than nursery tales or stories of Arabian Nights. On the other hand, superstitions like idol-worship which is affected by people at a certain stage of mental evolution foster in the worshippers a frame of mind which is distinctly conducive to moral progress. There are ancient superstitions like the excessive reverence for the cow in India which are highly beneficial to society economically ; or those like the inclusion of drinking in the category of sins which are of considerable hygienic importance. True, old superstitions like witchcraft and *Sati* resulted in barbarities. But, the atrocities attributable to them sink into utter insignificance compared to those ascribable to the wide propagation of the superstitious cult of survival of the fittest in "tooth and claw", and of the worship of Mammon and of fatherland.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CHIEF REMEDY.

I have in the previous sections shown that degeneration of civilized humanity (physical as well as moral) is a fact, and that it is mainly due to modern industrial civilization. I have already cited Western testimony in support of my views. Here is some more :—

“And what a slough ( the slough of Despond in London) it is,” says General Booth in his “Darkest England,” “no man can gauge who has not waded therein, as some of us have done, up to the very neck for long years. Talk about Dante’s Hell and all the horrors and cruelties of the torture-chamber of the lost ! The man who walks with open eyes and with bleeding heart through the shambles of our civilization needs no such fantastic images of the poet to teach him horror. Often and often when I have seen the young and the poor and the helpless go down before my eyes into the morass, trampled under foot by beasts of prey in human shape that haunt these regions, it seemed as if God were no longer in His world, but that in His stead reigned a fiend merciless as

Hell, ruthless as the grave. Hard it is, no doubt, to read in Stanley's pages of the slave traders coldly arranging for the surprise of a village, the capture of the inhabitants, the massacre of those who resist, and the violation of all the women ; but the Stony Streets of London, if they could but speak, would tell of tragedies as awful, of ruin as complete, of ravishments as horrible, as if we were in Central Africa, only the ghastly devastation is covered, corpse-like, with the artificialities and hypocrisies of modern civilization."

Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson observes : "It is not really credible in the West, to be anything but a man of business in the widest sense of the term ; to live in any way which cannot be shown directly or indirectly to increase the comforts and facilities of life or diminish its detriments. . . . The pace at which we are living, the competition of every kind, the intensity, the fatigue, the nerve-strain, involve a dislocation of the moral equilibrium of life. The East lives, and has always lived at a lower tension ; but it has kept a better balance between the active and contemplative faculties. It is in that balance that I see civilization."

Mr. E. B. Havell, a sincere well-wisher of India, advises the Indians : "None but the ignorant or charlatans will recommend you the



paths of Western commercialism as leading to true national prosperity. . . . Nowhere in India—not even in the direst time of famine and pestilence—is there such utter depravity, such helpless physical, moral and spiritual degradation as that which exists in the commercial cities of Europe directly brought about by modern industrial methods.” This degraded condition has been forcibly described by Huxley as “a condition in which food, warmth and clothing which are necessary for the mere maintenance of the functions of the body in their normal state, cannot be maintained ; in which men, women and children are forced to crowd into dens where decency is abolished, and the most ordinary conditions of healthful existence are impossible of attainment : in which the pleasures within reach are brutality and drunkenness ; in which pains accumulate at compound interest in the shape of starvation, disease, stunted development, and moral degradation ; in which the prospect of even steady and honest industry is a life of unsuccessful battling with hunger rounded by a pauper’s grave. I take it to be a mere plain truth, that throughout industrial Europe there is not a single large manufacturing city which is free from a large mass of people whose condition is exactly that described, and from a still

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greater mass, who living just on the edge of the social swamp are liable to be precipitated into it."

Mr. Price Collier in his *Germany and the Germans* published in 1913 says: "The period of twentyfive years during which I have known Germany has developed before my eyes the concomitants of vast and rapid industrial and commercial progress ; and they are : a love of luxury a great increase in gambling, a materialistic tone of mind, a wide-spread increase of immorality, and a tendency to send culture to the mint and to the market place to be stamped, so that it may be readily exchanged for the means of soft living." In regard to the spread of sexual immorality, he speaks of the "monstrous percentage of illegitimacy in Berlin, 20 per cent. or one child out of every five, born out of wedlock ; 14 per cent in Bavaria ; and 10 per cent. for the whole Empire."

As a set-off against the crying evils of Western civilization, it is claimed to have made three gifts to mankind—Natural Science, Democracy, Race-consciousness, Patriotism or Nationalism. We have already seen how the great good which the first might have done to humanity has been nullified by its extensive and unrestricted application to industry and warfare, and I have elsewhere\*

\* "Epochs of Civilization" and "The Illusions of New India."



shown how very dubious is the beneficence of the second gift. In regard to the third, the benefits it is supposed to have conferred have been very highly exaggerated. In fact, I am strongly inclined to think, it is doing far more harm than good. "The ruling classes," observes Tolstoy, "have in their hands the army, money, the schools, the churches and the Press. In the schools they kindle patriotism in the children by means of histories describing their own people as the best of all peoples and always in the right. Among adults, they kindle it by spectacles, jubilees, monuments, and by a lying patriotic Press. Above all they inflame patriotism in this way : perpetrating every kind of injustice and harshness against other nations, they provoke in them enmity towards their own people, and then in turn exploit that enmity to embitter their people against the foreigner. The intensification of this terrible feeling of patriotism has gone on among the European peoples in a rapidly increasing progression, and in our time has reached the utmost limits beyond which there is no room for it to extend." A strong leaning towards one's own community is as natural as the bias of pater families for his own family. The object of true culture (which is also wisdom) should be not to strengthen and magnify this natural impulse, but to waeken it

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and subordinate it to altruism and internationalism, so that one may come to regard all mankind as kindred. Patriotism and the physical courage it evokes are certainly good qualities, but no higher than what are displayed by some Carnivora that fight to the last gasp, snarling with their dying breath, and, in some cases, retaining their hold even when a limb is cut off, or by certain species of ants that fight in serried masses giving no quarter and never hesitating to sacrifice themselves, or that "seize an enemy at once one by each of her legs or antennae, and when once they have taken hold, they will suffer themselves to be cut in pieces rather than leave go." "I have already several times expressed the thought," says Tolstoy, "that in our day the feeling of patriotism is an unnatural, irrational and harmful feeling, and a great part of the cause of the ills from which mankind is suffering ; and that consequently, this feeling should not be cultivated, as is now being done, but should, on the contrary, be eradicated by all means available to rational men. . . . One would expect the harmfulness and irrationality of patriotism to be evident to everybody. But the surprising fact is that cultured and learned men not only do not themselves notice the harm and stupidity of patriotism, but they resist every exposure of it with the greatest obstinacy and



ardour (though without any rational grounds) and continue to belaud it as beneficent and elevating."

The present day exaltation of patriotism and nationalism above altruism and internationalism which is embodied in such slogans as Sinn-Fein and Deutschland-uber-Alles is leading to most disastrous consequences. Instead of promoting amity and good-will, it is fostering enmity and hatred. Instead of being a boon, it is proving a curse to humanity. In fact, it is one of the symptoms of the ethical perversity which, as we have seen before, is prevalent everywhere. Despite declamations and rhodomontades about "liberty or death," "one is a nationalist while waiting to become an Imperialist." As soon as the Poles, after a century and a half of oppressive alien rule, became free, they became clamant in their "demand for dominion over some fifteen millions of people, not merely non-Polish but bitterly anti-Polish. . . . All the new small states show a similar disposition : Czecho-slovakia, Yugo-slavia, Rumania, Finland, Greece have all now their own imperialism, limited only apparently by the extent of their power. All these peoples have fought for the right to national independence ; there is not one that is not denying the right to national independence. If every Bri-

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tain has its Ireland, every Ireland has its Ulster." \*

### II

The sages of the West, have, since the time of Herbert Spencer, Ruskin, Huxley and Alfred Russell Wallace, been discerning enough to perceive the grave and manifold evils of Western Civilization. "Even the best of Modern Civilizations," declared Huxley emphatically, "appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any worthy ideal, nor even possesses the merit of stability. I do not hesitate to express the opinion that if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family; if it is true that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater dominion over nature which is its consequence, and the wealth which follows upon that dominion, are to make no difference in the extent and the intensity of want with its concomitant physical and moral degradation amongst the masses of the people, I should hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation". Referring to the industrial perfection of England, Ruskin exclaimed in his usual vigorous language: "Alas, if read rightly

\*Norman Angel, "The Fruits of Victory" P. 153.



these perfectnesses are signs of a slavery in our, England a thousand times more bitter and degrading than that of the scourged helot Greek. Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense, and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the sucking branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with—this is to be slave masters indeed; and there might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lord's lightest words were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields than there is, while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted into the fineness of a web or racked into the exactness of a line."

But though the evils of modern industrial civilization have been too glaring to escape the notice of Western Seers, philanthropic endeavour has hitherto been confined to the application of palliative remedies, which, however good and laudable in their way, have utterly failed to restrain the diabolical activities of the Frankenstein raised by that civilization. To us it

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is an almost inexplicable enigma that Western sages and philanthropists while they deplore the recent deteriorated health (physical as well as moral) of civilized mankind and condemn modern industrialism, should fail to perceive their genetic relationship, at least so clearly, as to move them to recommend drastic measures. Huxley came very near that recognition, but he contented himself by expressing a pious wish for the advent of a "kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away." Among more recent writers, there are some, like Dean Inge, (the gloomy Dean as he is called) who have a strong suspicion of the causative connexion between modern industrialism and the chaotic state to which humanity has been reduced. But their perception is of a dim, nebulous character. The psychological explanation of this purblindness appears to us to be the bias in favour of a system which for three generations has been associated in the mind of the Westerner with what he understands to be progress, and which has made him the arbiter of the destinies of mankind. Even a philosophic scientist like Huxley viewed the attempts of the ancient sages to attain tranquillity and salvation which ended in "flight from the battlefield" as the "youthful discouragement of nonage." He would have the present day

Westerners as "grown men," play the man,  
"strong in will,

To strive, to seek to find and not to yield."

He did not apparently consider, of what avail is the victory of the Western "grown man," the path to which lies over the misery of countless fellow-creatures in all quarters of the globe, and which does not secure the peace and beatitude begotten of righteousness and concord, but brings in Sisyphean misery and disquiet engendered by unsatisfied desire, insatiable greed and perpetual discord. As we have seen above, he was greatly impressed by the failure of modern industrial civilization, but he had apparently a lurking expectation that the "grown man" of the West would be able to transform it so as to lead to a "large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family." The history of the civilized world since his time shows how his expectation has been belied, how, in fact, matters instead of improving, have been going from bad to worse. The complete, unqualified recognition of Western civilization as the root cause of the present superlatively miserable condition of mankind would confront the Westerner with a terrible dilemma—the necessity of the gradual demolition of the stup-



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endous fabric of commerce and industry which for several generations he has been taught to believe to be the greatest monument of Western progress, but which a detached and impartial examination of facts would lead one to pronounce as the greatest impediment to it.

The bias of the Westerner for the industrial civilization in which, he has been brought up often leads him, however philanthropically disposed he may be to involuntarily aggravate the misery of mankind instead of alleviating it. Nobel was such a lover of peace that he instituted a munificent prize for its promotion. Yet, he commercialised explosives which promoted industrialism, and made peace more difficult, and war more terrible than ever before. Hiram Maxim was an avowed philanthropist. He professed great sympathy for the weaker peoples of the globe. Nevertheless he armed the Westerner with guns which facilitated their enslavement, and which instead of adding to their happiness have vastly added to their misery. The American Ford is such an enthusiastic pacifist that when the late World War broke out he came to Europe on a mission of peace with a steamerful of similarly minded compatriots. But it does not appear to have occurred to him, that by enormously cheapening the production of motor vehicles he was

contributing materially to the growth of industrialism and militarism. I had the good fortune of camping with an American scientific and industrial expert some years ago. Our conversation frequently turned upon the phenomenal industrial development of the West. I pointed out the enormous mischief it was doing to humanity, and asked him what its goal was. My friend—the practical man that he was—said he did not know what the goal was ; all that he knew was that the wheels must go on crushing whom it may. The Westerners generally are practical people of this type. They would do their utmost to relieve the sufferings of the belligerents during war. We have nothing but admiration for the noble efforts, which self-sacrificing men and women make to tend the sick and the wounded in the battlefields. But they would not probe the deeper causes which have led to the terrible development of the modern military and predatory spirit and make earnest attempts to check it. Consequently, however benevolently disposed they may be their action proves to be as futile and fatuous as that of sprinkling water at the top of a tree while it is being eaten away at the roots by pestiferous vermins.

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### III

The remedies which are usually advocated and applied for mitigating the increasingly intense suffering of mankind are but palliatives which, as in the case of medicines, do not generally cure disease and not unoften tend only to aggravate it. The spread of "education" is one of these, and we have already seen how egregiously it has failed.\* Indeed, its failure had been anticipated by prescient observers like Herbert Spencer. Improvement of the condition of labourers is another. It is undeniable that a large number of the Western working men are now better lodged, better fed, and better clothed than they were half a century ago,

\* General Booth says in regard to compulsory education in England in his "In Darkest England and the Way Out:" "Educated the children are not. They are pressed through "Standards" which exact a certain acquaintance with A. B. C and pothooks and figures, but educated they are not in the sense of the development of their latent capacities so as to make them capable for the discharge of their duties in life . . . . Who can pretend that the girls whom our schools are now turning out are half as well educated for the work of life as their grandmothers were at the same age? How many of all these mothers of the future know how to bake a loaf or wash their clothes? . . . . And even the schooling, such as it is, at what an expense is it often imparted? The rakings of the human cesspool are brought into the school room and mixed up with your children . . . . It is good, no doubt, to learn the A B C, but it is not so good that in acquiring these indispensable rudiments, your children should also acquire the vocabulary of the harlot and the corner-boy." (*pp cit* 63-64). "By all means let us have our children educated. But when we have passed them through the Board school mill we have enough experience to see that they do not emerge the renovated and regenerated beings whose advent was expected by those who passed the Education Act." (*pp.* 76-77).



but the gulf between their material condition, and that of their masters is as wide as, if not wider than ever. The relative poverty of the Western working man has increased where his actual poverty has not. Therein lies the secret of the growing discontent and restlessness even among the comparatively well-to-do labouring classes in Europe. The increase of luxury naturally begins at the top of the social scale. When a desire for it reaches the bottom, as it must do sooner or later, there is heart-burning. With every addition to the wealth and luxury of the upper classes, unless there be a corresponding addition to the wealth and luxury of the lower classes, the latter will be discontented and will clamour and strike for a rise in their wages and for shorter working hours. After a period of loss and anxiety on the side of the Haves, and of misery on the side of the Have-nots, and often more or less of barbarity on both sides, the dispute between them is compromised, but never satisfactorily settled. As the standard of luxury is perpetually rising in the West, the struggle between Capital and Labour is perpetually recurring, especially as "the factory hand," as has been observed by Dean Inge, "dislikes his work, and dislikes it in proportion as he is subjected to the extreme specialisation and machine-like motions of up to date

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machinery." Besides, a certain amount of devitalisation, and demoralisation is inevitable in factory life even under the best of conditions.\*

Much is expected of the Rationalist movement which began in Europe about the close of the eighteenth century after it had made some advance in the Intellectual Stage of Civilization. That it has done some good is unquestionable. But it is not likely to contribute materially towards the solution of the problem which forms the subject of this essay.

Rationalism is not a new thing. It was a concomitant of the intellectual stage of ancient civilizations, as it has been of that of the modern civilization of the West. No present day rationalist could define his creed more emphatically than did Gautama Buddha in the fifth century B.C. who exhorted his followers "not to accept anything

\* "Our country" says Mr. H. G. Wells, "is in a dangerous state of social disturbance. The discontent of the labouring mass of the community is deep and increasing. It may be that we are in the opening phase of a real and irreparable class war. It is idle to pretend any longer that these Labour troubles, are the mere give and take of economic adjustment. No adjustment is in progress. New and strange agencies are at work in our midst, for which the word 'revolutionary' is only too faithfully appropriate . . . . . The worker is now beginning to strike for unprecedented ends--against the system, against the fundamental condition of labour . . . . . The thing our society has most to fear from labour is not organised resistance, not victorious strikes and raised conditions, but the black resentment that follows defeat."

that is either written or spoken by any teacher of any epoch or age unless such harmonises with reason and bears the test of examination ;" or go farther in his protest against ritualism than did Kapila, the author of the Sámkhya system of philosophy, who would not admit anything that could not be known by the three kinds of evidence recognised by him—perception, inference and testimony. But the attitude of the Rationalists of antiquity, whether Indian, Chinese, Greek or Roman, towards established religion was, as a rule, friendly and sympathetic, never hostile. As has been well said by Gibbon, "in their writings and conversation, the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason ; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith or worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume." Gautama Buddha was probably the most uncom-



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promising latitudinarian of the great rationalists of antiquity. But during his life-time, and for a long time afterwards, it is doubtful if the divergence of his system from that of Brahmanism was fully seen. Buddha respected, and was respected by, Brahmans. Some of the most distinguished members of his order were Brahmans. Asoka Piyadasi who did for Buddhism what Constantine did for Christianity, always considered Brahmans and Sramans as equally deserving of reverence and liberality. Even so late as the time of Fa Hian and Hiouen Thsang, we find Buddhism and Hinduism flourishing side by side, and Buddhist princes lavishing gifts upon Brahmans and Sramans alike. But the attitude of modern rationalism since the time of Voltaire towards religion has been violently hostile and iconoclastic. As a consequence, the bonds of religion have been considerably loosened. The centre of human interest has shifted from religion to politics and science as applied to industry, and as the mass of mankind must be always more or less credulous and superstitious, the superstitions of politics and science now prevail over those of religion. But, as we have seen before,\* the former, on the whole, are more injurious to society than the latter.

The most comprehensive attempt to check

\* Vide ante, pp 50-52 and Appendix A.

the growth of the military and predatory spirit of the West was first made by the international conference at the Hague over two decades ago. The Czar of Russia then suggested, that the use in armies and fleets of any new kinds of firearms whatever, and of new explosives or any powders more powerful than those then in use either for rifles or cannon, the throwing of projectiles or explosives of any kind from balloons or by any similar means, and the use in naval warfare of submarine torpedo-boats or plungers, or other similar engines of destruction should be prohibited ; and that the use in military warfare of the formidable explosives then existing should be restricted. Had these sensible suggestions been acted upon, there would undoubtedly have been considerable amelioration of the condition of humanity. But the peace conferences at the Hague gradually became "war conferences. The Hague became the inspiration of the new movements in armaments. The delegates came away full of suspicion one of the other. A new contest for force began. It was realised that the nations were antagonised and that each looked for safety not to treaties, but to its own armaments," Bernhardt rightly observes in his *Germany and the Next War*, "that the judgment of the Arbitration Courts could never

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be enforced by existing public opinion, and real compulsion could only be employed by means of war—the very thing which is to be avoided.”

The experiences of the Hague have lately been repeated at the various peace conferences which have been held since the conclusion of the great World War. The one man among the politicians that met at Versailles who could take a comparatively broad and statesman-like view of things was Woodrow Willson. But his was a cry in the wilderness. Diplomacy has proved a dismal failure, and so long as modern Industrialism lasts, there is no valid reason that it will be otherwise in the future.\* The truth is, though politics looms large in the public eye, at present the salvation of mankind lies in the obscurer fields of religion and ethics. The difficult work of establishing durable peace is to be accomplished not so much by politicians as by philosophers, not so much by jurists and diplomats as by sages and seers.

\* According to the New York *Nation* there was a strong ‘diplomatic smell of oil’ at the late Geneva conference: “For a brief moment the clouds lifted at Genoa, and we glimpsed the underlying economic struggle; the talk of ‘Germany,’ of ‘Russia’ of ‘France’ of ‘England,’ and of their political spokesmen faded; instead, the excited correspondents cabled columns about the “Royal Dutch,” the “Shell,” the ‘Anglo-Persian,’ and the ‘Standard Oil.’ The great oil companies assumed the centre of the stage; the politicians appeared plainly as the puppets; for a day or two we were even permitted to read the names of the men who pull the strings.” (Quoted in the *Modern Review* for July 1922.)



## IV

From the spectacular point of view modern civilization is a very imposing structure. It is stupendous, magnificent, superb. But it is founded upon falsehood, and is propped up by fraud. Its basic principle is to secure the well-being of man by perpetually provoking and feeding his sensual desires, by ceaselessly multiplying his physical wants, by eternally inventing means and appliances for gratifying them. A principle more false and fallacious could hardly be conceived. Its falsehood was exemplified in the life of Bacon who first lucidly enunciated it, and who was unquestionably the greatest prophet of modern civilization. The world has not witnessed a more towering and a more wonderful intellectual giant, nor a more miserable and a more contemptible moral pigmy. The truth is, as the Sanscrit couplet has it—

*Na játu kámas kámánám upabhogena Sámyati,  
Habishá krishnavartmeva bhùyaebábhivardhate.*

“Sensual desires are never satiated by their gratification, but increase all the more as fire fed by clarified butter.”

Even Epicurus with whom pleasure was the sole ultimate good, maintained the immense superiority of the pleasures of the mind over those of the body, and the Epicurean sage no less than the Vedantic, Buddhistic, Confucian, or

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the Stoic sought for happiness from within rather than from without. We have already seen how the modern gospel of sense-gratification, and the unrestricted application of science to industry for that purpose has been productive of deteriorated health (physical as well as moral) by inordinately increasing the intensity of the struggle for animal existence, by fomenting dissention and discord between individuals, sexes, classes and nations, and by fostering the baser emotions, such as greed, selfishness, envy etc. The tendency of civilization from remote antiquity has always been towards luxury—a tendency which has received immense impetus from the modern industrial civilization of the West. And, now more than ever, there is no truer gospel for civilized man than that of renunciation which promotes the growth of the nobler and healthier impulses of human nature, such as benevolence, selflessness, charity and mercy.

A civilization with foundation so unreal and insecure has necessitated its maintenance by deception, by the scientific exploitation of the weak under various pretences, by make-believe democratic institutions, by the propagation of illusory hopes of peace and prosperity and of notions of sham equality, liberty and fraternity. The great majority of mankind are always credulous; and the pur-

suit of Will-o-the-Wisps has always a special fascination for them. But there are signs which show that their credulity cannot be taxed much longer with impunity. And no wonder. When the Industrial Revolution was inaugurated, the prophets of the West predicted a "Calico-Millennium," and the descent of the Angel of Peace in a drapery of Calico. But instead of the Angel of Peace, there came down the Demon of War. When quickfiring and long-range guns and other diabolical means of quick destruction were invented, the wiseacres of the West prophesied that war had become too destructive to be risked by any Power. The result again has falsified the prediction. In no period of the history of civilized man was war so widespread and so enthusiastically engaged in by all sections of the community as it has been of late. When during the four terrible years of the late Great War, the world was wallowing in a welter of blood and frightfulness the like of which it had never seen before, the press, the platform and the pulpit rang with fervent hopes of a regenerated Europe. But, as Sir Phillip Gibbs says in the *New Republic*, "it is a tragic thought, and a certainty, that all the hopes of the peoples who were involved in the great European War have not only been unfulfilled by victory, or in the case of our



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enemies, destroyed by defeat, but to victors and vanquished alike, there is the horrible revelation that out of all that massacre and agony there has come as yet, no likelihood of long peace, no change in the old evils of diplomacy, no greater liberties or happiness for civilized mankind." The spirit of commercial and industrial exploitation which, as we have seen, is the root cause of the troubles and tribulations of mankind at the present day, is as rampant as ever. The Demon of Greed wields his sway as despotically as ever. Only, the vocabulary of simulacra has become richer by the addition of such phrases as "Mandate" and "Self-determination", and hypocrisy and knavery have got a more circuitous circumbendibus.

Happily, there are signs of disillusionment and of a revolt against industrialism. People are beginning to cast a longing, wistful look at the rural life and cottage industry they have left behind. "The deterioration of our population in large towns," says General Booth "is one of the most undisputed facts of social economics. The country is the breeding ground of healthy citizens. But for the constant influx of countrydom, cockneydom would long ere this have perished. But unfortunately the country is being depopulated. . . . He (the country child) lives a natural life amid the birds and trees and growing crops and the

animals of the fields. He is not a mere human ant crawling on the granite pavement of a great urban ants' nest, with an unnaturally developed nervous system and a sickly constitution." \*

"The sucking power of the towns", observes Sir Rider Haggard, "I consider to be the most serious and vital problem facing civilization to-day. The supposed advantages of the cities are drawing our people off the land, and changing them from solid, steady, dependable men and women to a race of neurotics who will ultimately be unable to cope with the stress of modern conditions. We must at all costs, before it is too late, provide some means of preserving or recreating a class rooted in the land. The trend of people from the land to the cities has always preceded the downfall of nations, and there is no reason for supposing that Nature will alter her rule in this respect."

"It looks," says Dean Inge, "as if Plato and Ruskin were right when they urged that the wealth that comes from trade is morally poisonous, and that we ought to go back to being a simple agricultural country. If these prophets are right, nothing will put an end to social discontent except the destruction of our great cities and great industries."

"In some rural districts of France, the people

\* "In Darkest England and the Way Out, pp 62-63.

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have boycotted all kinds of lighting except candles, have begun to sow more flax, and are resorting to the spinning wheel and the handloom to provide their own clothing. In some cities societies have been formed of men who agree not to wear cuffs and collars. . . . . In Spain the most prominent single movement is to substitute Catalan sandals, which are a traditional form of foot wear used by peasants and labourers in that province, in place of shoes." (The *Living Age* quoted in the *Modern Review*).

### V

In the last section, I showed that there are indications of a revulsion of feeling against Western civilization. They are most pronounced in India. It is in the fitness of things that it should be so. The non-industrial civilization of India still survives, though it has been largely affected by contact with the industrial civilization of the West. The great majority of the people still revere ethical development (especially selfless benevolence) much more than wealth and power. Sages still exert greater influence than politicians and plutocrats. The Rishis (Seers) of antiquity kept the development of industry within proper bounds. One of them, Manu, placed the esta-



blishment of huge machinery in the category of sins. A modern Rishi, Mahatma Gandhi, imbued with the same idea of the sinfulness of colossal industries has inaugurated a movement for the reintroduction of the *Charka* (spinning wheel) in Indian homes whence they have been absent for two or three generations. It is too early yet to judge of the success of the movement. The difficulties it has to contend with are enormous. But the headway it has made within three years in spite of them is very hopeful. Sixteen years ago, a proposal at the Calcutta Industrial Conference in favour of the *Charka* was simply laughed out. To-day the cult of the *Charká* has been accepted by good many men and women of light and leading,\* and some of them, who are among the brightest luminaries of Law, Science and Literature, inspired by the noble spirit of renunciation and selflessness of their illustrious leader, have devoted themselves wholeheartedly to its propagation. The sight is by no means uncommon of men and women who have hitherto been rolling in Western luxuries giving them up, and, clad in coarse

\* The following resolution was passed at the joint conference of Agriculture, Industries and Co-operation held in Calcutta in July 1922 :

"The committee recommends to Government to issue a communique supporting the introduction of *Charka* as one of the principal home industries of Bengal."

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homespun, living the simple life that prevailed here two or three generations ago.

This is a good augury for the future. But the obstacles are so formidable that one cannot be reasonably sanguine of success, in a short time. The tastes for inutilities, superfluities and fatuities inculcated by three generations of Western Civilization, cannot be expected to be eradicated or even materially weakened in less than one generation, and that too with persevering and persistent effort. The effort would have to be very strenuous and very insistent as all the forces of modern Parasite-dom headed by Governments are ranged against it.\*

If we are right in our diagnosis of the deeper causes of the recent decline of health, physical as well as moral, all over the civilized world, then nothing will restore it save the destruction of the big power driven industries. It is idle to hope to make them beneficent. One might as well hope to

\* Here is an outspoken declaration on the subject in a recent issue of the *Morning post* : "We have a direct concern in India because it is one of the chief marketsof the world. We went there as traders and despite all the fine talk of our modern high brows, there is still the material basis of our rule which might be put in the sentence ; we give you protection and you buy our goods. If we abandon India it will not be only the Indians who suffer but the twelve million people of Lancashire, and indeed our whole industrial system will be affected. After all when all is said this nation must live. That is the first consideration and we see no other way in which this nation can live upon these little islands save by industry and trade "

transform Satan into an Angel. It is possible to share the profits of all big industries with workmen so that they may become copartners ; it is possible to nationalise industries so that the whole nation may be benefited by them ; it is possible to placate subject peoples by giving them Self-Government so that they may choose for themselves what sort of commercial and fiscal relations they should have with the Suzerain powers ; it is possible to distribute the huge profits of titanic industries so as to attenuate the present vast gulf between a small minority of Haves, and the great majority of Have-nots ; it is possible to fix uniform wages for brain work and for manual work ; it is possible to have a federation of all civilized states and establish such amity among the great Powers as would lead to the cessation of the fight for the markets and the resources of the industrially backward peoples of the globe. All this is possible, but it appears to us to be highly improbable except to a very limited extent under existing conditions.\*

\* Communism has recently been tried on a large scale in Russia. But Bolshevism so far has been a failure. Lenin in a recent statement admits, that workmen could not be got on the same rate of pay for different kinds of work. "The machine worker" says he "still wants more than the man with a pick ; and the brain worker still wants more than the machine worker, Russia will not have communism until human nature is changed." And there is no sign



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The most satisfactory solution to our mind, of the problem of Degeneration, as, indeed, of various other problems which confront us to-day, lies in reversion to rural life and cottage-industry. It would be well if a conference were convened for suggesting measures how this could be accomplished. One of the steps that suggests itself to us is the propagation of the gospel of Renunciation. It would be beneficial alike to physical and moral health. Genuine good-will is not possible without it ; and without such good-will there can be no durable peace. It is one of the fundamental principles of all the ethical religions of the world. But modern influences have more or less undermined or weakened them all. Besides, genuine Christianity, the religion we are most concerned with, has never been a great motive force in the West, so far as the conduct of the mass of the people is concerned. The life of the Westerner generally is compartmental. He has one compartment reserved for religion and morality, and another for education and conduct. He locks up the former when he comes out of the church or chapel. There are some who as a

of that yet. The idea of a federation of states underlay that of the League of Nations but it has turned out an egregious failure. The same remark applies to recent attempts at "Self-Government" among subject peoples like the Indians.

remedy for the obvious defect of the absence of moral training in the system of education in vogue now advocate class-teaching in religion and morality. It is good in its way, but does not go far. There is no country in the world where religion has been taught more extensively and more assiduously than in Germany.\* But, if the value of religious education is to be estimated by the extent to which it contributes to ethical development—and we do not know of any other rational way of estimating it—its comparative worthlessness is proved by the fact, that no country exhibited greater moral perversity than Germany during the late war. Ethical principles should be inculcated in the young, not so much by lessons, precepts and maxims as by regulation of the mode of living, by daily practices for the establishment of mental harmony, and by the performance of social service. In this connection, some such scheme of cultural education as the following may prove useful :

\*"The Prussian system remains to-day both for Catholics and Protestants essentially denominational. All schools whether elementary or secondary, are Evangelical, Catholic, Jewish or mixed . . . In all cases the teachers are appointed with reference to religious faith ; religious instruction is given compulsorily in school hours and is inspected by the clergy." (Encyclopoedia Britannica 11th. edition Art. Education.) "The religious lesson is regarded as the most important, and a religious atmosphere is expected to pervade the school." (Report of an International Inquiry into Moral instruction Vol. ii, p. 218.) Canon E. Rees says in the Church

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1. An area of some square miles should be taken for an educational settlement.

2. A certain portion of the land is to be set apart for the common requirements of the settlement—a dairy farm and the cultivation of cereals, pulses etc.

3. Detached cottages, each large enough to accomodate at least ten scholars are to be built for the Professors and their families (if any). Each cottage should have sufficient land attached to it for a kitchen garden and an orchard which, so far as possible, should be developed by the Professors with the help of their pupils.

4. The Professors, the establishment needed for the settlement, and the scholars are to be fed and clothed from the produce of the settlement so far as practicable. The Professors and the settlement-staff should, besides, each have a little pocket money.

5. The Professors appointed should be such as would be able to inculcate in the pupils, the fundamental ethical principles—renunciation, altruism.

Quarterly Review for January 1908 : "The children are religiously instructed in Germany . . . . The religious teaching is as definite as heart could desire in Germany." Prof. G. Hoeft, Hamburg, says : "The chief factor in the moral education given in our German Schools is denominational religious instruction and teaching of the catechism" (Paper presented to the International Moral Education Congress at The Hague 1912.) These quotations are made from Tract No. 22 of the Secular Education League of England.



sm, and mental harmony—by plain living and by suitable daily practices and duties.\*

6. Provided Professors with the requisite qualifications be available, there should be no bar to the inclusion in the courses of study of any subject connected with science, philosophy, history and literature. †

Such settlements of cultural education would demonstrate the futility and fatuity of the modern industrial civilization of the West, and train up a body of sages and seers who by their counsel, precept and example would counteract the pernicious influence of that civilization. One trembles to think of the fate that is likely to befall mankind without such check. ‡

\*Some of the Indian practices and duties for securing this object are given in the writer's work on "Survival of Hindu civilization Part II Physical Degeneration, its causes and Remedies." pp 148—152.

† Institutions on lines similar to those suggested in the text have been started at several places in India though not on such a comprehensive scale. A short account of these is given in the writer's work on "National Education and Modern Progress."

‡ See Appendix B.

## APPENDIX A.

Mr. C. T. Gorham Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of England says in an article on "Constructive Rationalism" in the last R.P.A. Annual that "as far as life in this world is concerned, religion itself is not a constructive or unifying force," and that "what religion has succeeded in building is a house of cards." The sympathetic attitude of Indian rationalists has built up a religion which has not only tolerated, but has actually embraced all shades of thought and spiritual aspiration from monism and agnosticism to anthropomorphism and fetishism, and which has sheltered within its fold a considerable section of mankind for over twenty-five centuries, and enabled them to maintain their civilization, and to have, on the whole, despite various political revolutions, as good a share of happiness and prosperity as has ever fallen to the lot of the multitude in any age in any part of the world. The same remarks apply *mutatis mutandis* to China. India and China emphatically contradict Mr. Gorham's statements.

"Throughout its history," observes Mr. Gorham, "Christianity has been and still is a violently disintegrating and strife-provoking agency."

There is no doubt, that Christianity was for centuries a "violently disintegrating and strife-provoking agency." But that was not the fault of the religion which embodies the highest ethical ideal of antiquity—and no higher ideal has been reached as yet—but was due to causes which I have tried to discuss elsewhere.\* However that may be, it would be a travesty of history to say, that it is still a "violently disintegrating and strife-provoking agency." There is no gain-saying the fact, that all the great wars since the close of the last century have been largely due, directly or indirectly, to industrialism caused by the application of Natural science to industry, and they have been more devastating and destructive than the wars of Mediæval Europe. The former are as largely due to the superstitions of science, as the latter were to the superstitions of religion. For nearly six or seven decades the empire of religion has been on the wane and that of science (or rather applied science) has been gaining ground. The result has been described in the text.

\* *Epochs of Civilization* pp. 13, 253-256, 268-273.



## APPENDIX B.

Mr. H. G. Wells says in a recent issue of the *Review of Reviews*: "The end of the next war (which is in the air just now) will be a triumph of the dying over the dead. . . . Aerial bombing, with bombs each capable of destroying a small town, will be practicable 1,000 miles beyond the military front, and the seas will be kept clear of shipping by mines and submarine activities. There will be no distinction between combatants and non-combatants, because every able-bodied citizen, male or female, is a potential producer of food and munitions." The following extracts are from a recent issue of Pearson's Magazine: "A French youth, who at the time of the Armistice was still at school in Paris, has invented 'the rain of flaming oil.' A rocket with a timefuse is filled with a mass of explosive and oil. When the fuse reaches the explosive, the latter scatters the oil and sets fire to it so that a whole regiment could be smothered by a rain of flaming oil and obliterated within a few minutes. The only protection would be to burrow under ground.

Then comes a 125 mile-gun, which has a pro-

jectile consisting of shells packed one inside the other, each as it explodes driving on the next. The principle is capable of indefinite expansion so that Berlin could be bombarded from London and *vice versa*. Twenty of the new guns firing the new poison gas shells would render Paris or London untenable in twenty-four hours.

An 'electric exploder' is being perfected which using Herzian waves explodes stores of ammunition hidden underground. A new gun larger than a syringe about the length of a man's arm drives a sharp-nosed bullet, 3 inches long and an inch in diameter through an inch thick steel plate. It is noiseless and smokeless giving no warning till the bullet strikes its mark. An enlarged gun of this kind could throw a five-ton gas-shell many miles.

Tanks have been improved, so that a fleet of them, using tons of liquid gas will obliterate every living thing in the fields and farms, the villages and cities of the enemy countries. Then there is a 'hovering aeroplane' that can sustain itself in the air like a hawk, and drop a bomb on any object below.

A 10,000 ton armoured submarine is another gem, and just before the end, of the war, the Germans had a 'crewless boat' guided elect-

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rically. Any naval port can be shut up by this without the loss of a man. A wireless installation can direct a submarine against a battleship unerringly. A 'flying warship' has also been planned, moving on the water with turbines and fitted also with planes, so that it can rise into the air, pass over mine defences and bomb fortifications or ships within them. In Chesapeake Bay bombs were dropped from a height of 5,000 feet on a battleship target, making 100 per cent of hits, and one 2000 lbs. bomb, dropped on the battleship, Alabama, blew her out of the water sending her down in 30 seconds. A bomb of 4000 lbs. has now been invented which striking within 50ft of a battleship would result in her literal disintegration.

The latest poison-gas is said, if breathed, to be like breathing flame and a drop or two in liquid form puts a man out of action. This gas dropped from aeroplanes may be concentrated on any spot rendering it uninhabitable. An 'electric gun' has been invented in Britain that kills like lighting by electric waves to a distance that would sweep over and through a regiment killing as noiselessly as a stroke of lighting.

Such are some of the devilries now being invented by the most 'civilised' nations.



In Baltimore U. S. A. is a factory wherein 10,000,000. lbs of poison are stored for manufacturing poison-gas. Great Britain has many chemical factories capable of turning out 200 tons of gas per day. France and Germany are also provided.

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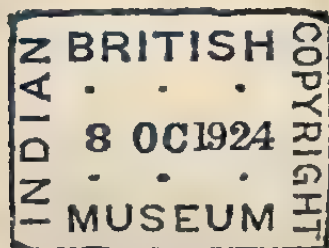
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